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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 39th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 23 July 1997, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh)
(Vice-President)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

COORDINATION, PROGRAMME AND OTHER QUESTIONS (agenda item 6) (continued):

- (e) JOINT AND CO-SPONSORED UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS/ACQUIRED IMMUNODEFICIENCY SYNDROME (HIV/AIDS) (continued)

Draft resolutions entitled "Human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS)" (E/1997/L.36 and L.46)

The PRESIDENT introduced draft resolution E/1997/L.46 prepared following informal consultations on draft resolution E/1997/L.36.

As a result of the consultations held new texts for the seventh preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 5 had been agreed upon.

Draft resolution E/1997/L.46 was adopted.

Accordingly, draft resolution E/1997/L.36 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

REGIONAL COOPERATION (agenda item 10) (continued)

Draft resolution entitled "Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in the context of reform of the United Nations" (E/1997/40/Add.1, chap. I, sect. C, para. 17)

The draft resolution on ECLAC (E/1997/40/Add.1, chap. I, sect. C, para. 17) was adopted.

The PRESIDENT declared that the Council had completed its consideration of agenda item 10.

REPORTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES (agenda item 7) (continued):

- (a) ECONOMIC QUESTIONS (continued)
- (b) ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS (continued)

Sixth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas (E/1997/82)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to state its views on the two recommendations by the Secretary-General in his report on the Sixth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas (E/1997/82, para. 21 (a) and (b)). The first recommendation was to convene, the Seventh Regional Cartographic Conference early in the year 2001 at the very latest, for five days; the second recommendation was to request the Secretary-General to promote a continuous dialogue between Member States and other parties concerned with a view to implementing the resolutions of the Sixth Regional Cartographic Conference.

The recommendations contained in paragraph 21 (a) and (b) of the Secretary-General's report (E/1997/82) were approved.

Draft resolution entitled "Consumer protection" (E/1997/L.39) (continued)

The PRESIDENT, referring to draft resolution E/1997/L.39, said that as a result of informal consultations a consensus had been reached on some minor amendments to the text. The amendments were as follows: in paragraph 2, the first word "Recognizing" should be replaced by "Recognizes" (the amendment did not apply to the French text); under operative paragraph 6, the phrase "the proposals of Consumers International on the early revision of the United Nations guidelines" should be deleted; in the second line of paragraph 7, the word "recommendations" should be inserted before "specific".

Draft resolution E/1997/L.39, as orally amended, was adopted.

(c) SOCIAL QUESTIONS (continued)

Mr. SEGURO (Observer for Portugal), speaking as Portugal's Secretary of State for Youth, said that the Portuguese Government intended to host a World Conference of Ministers for Youth, in Lisbon from 8-12 August 1998, under the auspices of the United Nations. The aim of the Conference was to enrich the current debate in the United Nations on the problems of young people and to propose guidelines for the implementation of the Programme of Action for Youth to the year 2000 and beyond, as well as to encourage international cooperation along those lines among Governments and all those who sought to improve the situation of young people. The Portuguese Government was anxious to open the way for the broad participation of all countries, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned and national and regional youth organizations in the preparations for the Conference. All the relevant United Nations bodies and agencies would also be called upon to provide support. The Portuguese Government sincerely hoped that the Conference would result in a declaration, which would be not merely a statement of good intentions, but a tool for action spelling out the principles for combating unemployment, drugs and problems arising in health, education and community life. In that spirit, Portugal was very willing to support the participation in the Conference of the least developed countries. In that connection, he recalled the commitment already made by the Portuguese delegation before the Commission for Social Development that United Nations assistance in the preparations for the Conference would not have any financial implications for the Organization.

It was hoped that the Conference would help to place a new priority on the international community's agenda, namely the formulation and adoption of real youth policies.

Draft resolution IV: Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, including a World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, contained in chapter I of the report of the Commission for Social Development (E/1997/26) and amendments published in document E/1997/L.29

Mr. BARREIRA de SOUSA (Observer for Portugal) explained that the sole aim of the amendments (E/1997/L.29) tabled by Portugal to draft resolution IV of the Commission for Social Development was to update that draft. When the latter had been adopted, the Chairman of the Commission had announced that the United Nations and the Portuguese Government had agreed that the holding of the Conference would have no financial implications for the regular budget of the United Nations. The Secretary-General had then been requested to present a progress report on bilateral consultations regarding the logistical and substantive preparations for the Conference. The purpose of the amendments was to take note of that report of the Secretary-General (E/1997/103) and of the holding of the third session of the International Youth Forum of the United Nations System, which was to be organized jointly by the United Nations, and the Portuguese National Youth Council, at Braga (Portugal) one week before the World Conference. As the two amendments were not controversial, it ought to be possible to adopt them without a vote.

The amendments published in document E/1997/L.29 were adopted.

Draft resolution IV contained in chapter I of the report of the Commission for Social Development (E/1997/26), as amended, was adopted.

The PRESIDENT said that the Council had completed its consideration of the recommendations of the Commission for Social Development.

Draft resolution entitled "First regional meeting convened by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to evaluate the World Summit for Social Development" (E/1997/L.41)

In response to a question from Mr. SCHUMACHER (Luxembourg), the PRESIDENT explained that informal consultations would be held on draft resolution E/1997/L.41 only if the Council were unable to adopt it as it stood.

Draft resolution E/1997/L.41 was adopted.

Mr. SCHUMACHER (Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the members of the European Union, said he was pleased to note that the regional commissions

were duly following up major United Nations conferences. The European Union would nevertheless consider it regrettable if numerous texts of that kind were referred to the Council or General Assembly.

Report of the Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (E/1997/53)

Mrs. DUEÑAS LOZA (Acting Director of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women), introducing the report of the Institute's Board of Trustees on its seventeenth session, announced that, for the sake of rationalization, the Institute's research and training programmes had been regrouped in five main clusters which tied in with the action plans and programmes of United Nations conferences, especially the Fourth World Conference on Women. In 1996, priority had been given to contributions to the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and to meetings of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and inter-agency meetings. The Institute was reviewing its work programme with a view to implementing those aspects of the Beijing Platform for Action which fell within its mandate and, to that end, it had drawn up a research and training framework for the 1998-1999 biennium and beyond.

Part VIII of the report summarized discussions within the Board of Trustees and the resultant recommendations. The Board of Trustees had called on the Institute to capitalize on the expertise it had already acquired, while giving priority to the following topics: the girl child, women in armed conflicts, violence against women and the follow-up to Habitat II. The Board had examined the Institute's activities in the field of information, communication and documentation and had stressed the need to modernize the Institute's computer equipment. It had also recommended that the Institute expand its networks and cooperate more closely with agencies in the United Nations system, especially regional commissions.

With regard to finance, the Board of Trustees had requested that priority be given to fund-raising strategies and, at the same time, had urged Member States to increase their voluntary contributions to the Institute. The Board of Trustees had suggested that, to enhance the Institute's efficiency, full use should be made of the resources of the Strategic Planning Committee

and was of the opinion that briefing meetings with permanent missions were a good way of expanding dialogue with donors.

At operational level, the Institute had actively participated in the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality and had contributed to the report of the Secretary-General on "Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system". The Institute was present on the Women Watch Internet site, together with the Division for the Advancement of Women and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). The Institute had attended the twenty-ninth session of the Statistical Commission and the tenth session of the High-Level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries. It was participating in inter-agency activities in the Dominican Republic and took part in monthly meetings of the heads of agencies in that country. The Institute had likewise attended the discussions of the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly on subjects within its remit.

Together with the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Turin (Italy), the Institute had produced a multimedia training package on "Women, environmental management and sustainable development" and had run a subregional training seminar for central and eastern Europe in September 1996. The Institute was finalizing a training package on the collection and analysis of data on unpaid work by men and women and was preparing a survey to identify training needs in information technology in women's organizations and institutes in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

Draft resolution IV entitled "Working languages of the Sub-Commission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East" contained in the Report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (E/1997/28)

The PRESIDENT noted that the statement on the financial implications of the draft resolution was not available. He asked the secretariat of the body concerned to take steps to ensure that that document was prepared, and proposed that the Council defer consideration of the draft resolution until its resumed session.

It was so decided.

(d) HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS (*continued*)

Mr. EL KHAZEN (Lebanon) said he had objections to resolution 1997/6 of the Commission on Human Rights concerning the Middle East peace process because it did not mention Security Council resolution 425 (1978). There could be no lasting peace in the Middle East until Israel withdrew from South Lebanon and the Golan Heights in accordance with resolution 425, which Lebanon demanded be implemented in full.

Similarly, in regard to resolution 1997/42 entitled "Human rights and terrorism", Lebanon, while condemning terrorism in all its forms, considered that acts of resistance committed by a people in order to recover its sovereignty could not be considered terrorism. Lebanon claimed the right to resist Israeli occupation in southern Lebanon.

Draft decision 38 entitled "Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" contained in chapter I of the report of the Commission on Human Rights (E/1997/23) and the amendments thereto contained in document E/1997/L.47

Mr. WINNICK (United States of America), introducing the amendments contained in document E/1997/L.47, stressed the great importance his country attached to the eradication of racism. While it was crucial for the United Nations to remain in the forefront of the struggle to combat racism and intolerance, it should do so as far as possible by using existing mechanisms. The United States was not convinced of the need to hold an international conference on the subject, which would risk duplicating the work of the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1993. In addition to the costs involved, the proliferation of international conferences was damaging the credibility of the United Nations. The Secretary-General had recently highlighted the need to strengthen the role of the General Assembly by focusing debates on key issues, and the holding of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to the question of racism would be entirely in keeping with that approach. The United States considered that the General Assembly should be free to choose whether to convene an international conference or a special session, and the amendments proposed reflected that view.

Mr. MCHUMO (Observer for the United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said the two resolutions concerning racial discrimination had been adopted by the Commission on Human Rights as a whole following arduous discussions. The fact that some

delegations were attempting to reopen the debate was therefore a matter of great concern.

United Nations action to bring an end to racial discrimination had not yielded the desired goals. While the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the principal instrument in the struggle against racism, had indeed been ratified by 147 States, only 30 had recognized the competence of the Committee in eliminating racial discrimination and many had entered substantial reservations in regard to article 4, which considerably reduced that article's effectiveness. In addition, the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination had not had the desired impact. In those circumstances, a world conference was essential to boost efforts and to increase public awareness. That was the conclusion that had been reached by the Commission on Human Rights after considering various possibilities. It was for that reason that the Group of 77 and China rejected the amendments proposed by the United States, and reaffirmed their support for the convening of a world conference by the year 2001. Preparations for that conference should be initiated without further delay.

Mrs. SCHOSSELER (Luxembourg) said the European Union remained fully committed to combating racism, as was demonstrated by the creation of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia and by the fact that 1997 had been declared "European Year against Racism". When resolution E/CN.4/1997/L.12/Rev.1 had been adopted by the Commission on Human Rights, the European Union had not opposed the consensus, although it would have preferred a different formula from that of a world conference, as it considered that the numerous conferences held in the past few years had put a considerable strain on the United Nations system, and that there was an urgent need to put into effect commitments already made. She did not wish to reopen debate on a decision already taken, but would abstain on the amendments proposed by the United States because she did not think the Council was the appropriate forum to discuss matters of substance. She stressed that a world conference on racism would have to consider all forms of racism and racial discrimination in the various regions and come up with a concrete programme of action.

Mr. HYNES (Canada) said he fully endorsed the convening of a high-level meeting on racism whose focus should be on taking action against racism rather than on continued standard setting. In view of the financial situation of the United Nations, the Canadian delegation stressed the need to

find the necessary funds to hold a World Conference on Racism within existing resources without diverting funds from other human rights programmes. However, in view of the fact that the General Assembly would be a more appropriate forum to consider ways and means of following up the proposal from the Commission on Human Rights, his delegation had decided to abstain from the vote on the amendments put forward by the United States.

Mrs. SIELY (Australia) said that the United Nations had already taken forceful action against racism in all its forms. Australia would therefore abstain from voting on the amendments while sharing the concerns expressed over the costs entailed by a world conference and considering that a special session of the General Assembly would achieve useful results in a less expensive way.

At the request of the representative of Uganda, a vote was taken by roll-call on the amendments proposed by the United States with minor editorial amendments.

Japan, having been drawn by lot by the Chairman, was called upon to vote first.

In favour: United States of America.

Against: Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Djibouti, Gabon, India, Jamaica, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mexico, Mozambique, Philippines, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Zambia.

Abstaining: Australia, Belarus, Canada, Czech Republic, El Salvador, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Japan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The amendments proposed by the United States with minor editorial amendments (E/1997/L.47) were rejected by 27 votes to 1, with 21 abstentions.

The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection he would take it that the Council wished to adopt draft decision 38 recommended by the Commission on Human Rights.

Draft decision 38 of the Commission on Human Rights was adopted.

Mr. WINNICK (United States of America) said that his country attached great importance to the improvement of race relations and considered it very important for the United Nations to remain a place where the international community could unite its efforts in the fight against racism. However, he considered world conferences to be extremely costly and felt that what was needed was deeds rather than words. He therefore suggested that every effort should be made to exploit existing means and, in particular, to make full use of General Assembly machinery, and to ensure application of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination.

Draft decisions recommended by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (E/1997/L.23, E/1997/L.44)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to consider the three draft decisions recommended for adoption by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in section D of document E/1997/L.23, taking into account the administrative and financial implications set out in document E/1997/L.44.

Mrs. KIRSCH (Luxembourg) said that, before making any decision, the members of the European Union would like to have more time to examine the draft decisions, which they noted did not appear in the report of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the implications of which had not been distributed until that morning. They therefore requested that any decision on those draft decisions, as well as on the fourth draft decision recommended for adoption by the Committee (E/1997/L.23/Add.2), should be deferred until the substantive session of the Council had been resumed.

The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to defer any decision on the four draft decisions recommended by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights until the substantive session had been resumed.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.

